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Aleksandr Dugin's transformation from a lunatic fringe figure into a mainstream political publicist, 1980–1998: A case study in the rise of late and post-Soviet Russian fascism

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ABSTRACT

The paper¹ was completed in 2008 and complements previous analyses of post-communist Russian right-wing extremism, in general, and studies of “neo-Eurasianism,” in particular, surveying some circumstances of the emergence of its major ideologist Aleksandr Dugin (b. 1962). It introduces some teachers and collaborators of Dugin who influenced him before he became a known journalist, writer and commentator in the late 1990s. It also sketches some of Dugin's initiatives and activities until he rose to the position of an official advisor to Gennady Seleznev, the Speaker of the State Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament, in 1998. The footnotes provide a comprehensive bibliography on Western and Russian sources on the Russian “New Right.” It concludes with some suggestion where further research into the Dugin phenomenon could go.

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¹ The paper expands on my earlier survey: *Toward an Uncivil Society? Contextualizing the Recent Decline of Parties of the Extreme Right Wing in Russia, 2002*. On Dugin's fascism, see Griffin, Loh, and Umland (2006); Umland (2006b, 2006c, 2006d), reprinted in: Verkhovskii (2006), and Laruelle (2007).

the Comparative Study of the Extreme Right. With an afterword by Walter Laqueur (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag 2006).

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“Time has come for Russia to find a clear-cut ideology, as well as a tough and understandable line in both, domestic and foreign affairs.”

*Aleksandr Dugin in 2005*²

In the mid-1990s, Walter Laqueur observed, in his survey of world-wide neo-fascist tendencies after the end of the Cold War, that “[a] variety of esoteric cults have their fervent followers on the extreme Right, in Russia perhaps more than in any other country” (Laqueur, 1996). One of the Russian “New Right’s”³ most prolific journalists, erudite theorists as well as industrious publishers has been the mysticist Aleksandr Gel’evich Dugin (b. 1962).⁴ In spite of Dugin’s, already in the early 1990s, notable publicistic successes within the far right, the study of the ideas, entourage and activities of this non-conformist writer has, until recently, been seen as the domain of an exclusive group of students of Russian sub-culture, esotericism and occultism with a taste for the bizarre in post-Soviet society. However, the widely reported establishment, in 2001, of Dugin’s Socio-Political Movement “*Evrasiya* (Eurasia)” and its later transmutation into the so-called International “Eurasian Movement” with its Eurasian Youth Movement represent merely the latest peaks in a chain of consequential initiatives by this colorful figure throughout the 1990s. Counter-intuitively to many observers of Russia, the content, spread and reception of Dugin’s quixotic ideas had, already in the 1990s, become relevant for an adequate assessment of mainstream Russian political, social and cultural trends. Although Dugin has by now been mentioned in a number of influential Western outlets, he still remains an obscure figure among Russia watchers (Berman, 2005; Bertram, 2007; Clover, 1999, 2000; Ingold, 2006; Mathyl, 2002a; Thumann, 2002; Umland, 2006a).

Previous interpretations of Dugin concentrated on the evolution and nature of his ideas.⁵ The below survey focuses on some particulars of his biography and collaborators within Moscow’s right-wing scene from approximately 1980–1998. In 1998, Dugin became an advisor to Gennady Seleznev, the Speaker of the lower house of the Russian parliament, the State Duma. This move marked

a change of his status in Russian society: he left the realm of lunatic fringe publicism and entered Moscow’s political establishment. The aim of the below outline is to contribute to answering where Dugin “is coming from” by way of adding to previous text analyses details on the intellectual influences, social activities and journalistic career that prepared his later entry into high politics. In doing so, the paper complements Markus Mathyl’s pioneering studies of the emergence of an anti-Western counter-culture in Russia in the 1990s (Mathyl, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2002b, 2003). It, however, ignores Dugin’s activities in Eduard Limonov’s National-Bolshevik Party (NBP) in 1994–1998 to be described in detail in a forthcoming book by Andrei Rogatchevski.⁶

The Yuzhinskii circle

Most reports agree that Dugin grew up in a privileged family as the son of a *GRU* (the Soviet military intelligence agency) officer, either a general or a colonel, and that his grand-father and great-grandfather had also been army officers.⁷ One biography alleges that his father died when Dugin was still a child (Polyannikov, 2002). He entered, after finishing high school with mediocre results, the Moscow Aviation Institute, on the insistence of his father.⁸ Young Dugin interrupted his education, however, because of insufficient study results, on his own will,⁹ or because of an arrest connected to dissident activities. According to Mark Sedgwick, who bases his report on an interview with Dugin,

[i]n 1983 the authorities learned of a party in a painter’s studio where Dugin had played the guitar and sung what he called “mystical anti-Communist songs,” and Dugin was briefly detained. The *KGB* found forbidden literature in this room, principally books by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and [Yurii] Mamleev [...]. Dugin was expelled from the [Moscow] Institute of Aviation, where he was studying. He found employment as street sweeper and continued reading in the [Soviet Union’s largest] Lenin Library with a forged reader’s card (Sedgwick, 2004).

In contradiction to this report, another biography of Dugin says that, after his expulsion from the Aviation Institute, he started working in a *KGB* archive where he

² *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 27th January 2005.

³ The construct “Russian New Right” has, apparently, first been used by Yanov (1978). In Russia, the term “New Right” was introduced, seemingly, by Tsymburskii (1995). More recently, it has been used, in a sophisticated way, by Sokolov (2006). For a critique of “New Right” as generic concept (and not merely proper name) in political analyses, see Umland (2006e), reprinted in: *Forum noveishei vostochnoevropeiskoi istorii i kul’tury*, 2006.

⁴ Among the earliest analyses of the Dugin phenomenon are Hielscher (1993a, 1993b). Among the best English-language analyses of the phenomenon are Allensworth (1998) and Shenfield (2001).

⁵ E.g. Luks (2000); Ingram (2001); Shlapentokh (2001); Dunlop (2001); Wiederkehr (2004); Marlène Laruelle (2006). An 800-page Austrian dissertation on Dugin’s writings is currently in print: Höllwerth (2007).

⁶ Rogatchevski (forthcoming). See also Mikhail Sokolov, “Natsional-bol’shevistskaya partiya: ideologicheskaya evolyutsiya i politicheskii stil’,” in: Verkhovskii, *Russkii natsionalizm*, 139–164.

⁷ Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 191.

⁸ Kaledin (2003). According to the same source, Dugin’s father, allegedly, put his son for a while into a psychiatry.

⁹ Kaledin, “Terapiya okazalas’ bessil’noi pered maniei Dugina-mladshogo pereustroit’ mir.”

gained access to, and read large amounts of, forbidden literature on Masonry, fascism and paganism.⁹

At about the same time, if not before (Likhachev, 2002), Dugin became involved in a secretive group of esoteric intellectuals, the so-called Yuzhinskii circle, interested in European and Oriental mysticism, black magic, occultism, and alchemy. The most important Russian reference work on late Soviet independent groupings calls the Yuzhinskii circle the “Movement of Intellectuals-Conservatives.” The hand-book states that the circle of approximately 10 people had been founded in 1966, and, in the late 1980s, proclaimed, as its aim,

an attempt to found an ideology uniting all patriotic creative forces of the State [Derzhava], on the basis of uniform metaphysical traditions and values. [It is] an attempt to transform politics from a fight for power into an instrument of harmonizing the imperial ethnics.¹⁰

Most sources agree that the Yuzhinskii circle had been founded in the 1960s at the flat of Yurii Mamleev (b. 1931), a well-known Russian mysticist, novelist and metaphysic. The occultist circle was named after the street, *Yuzhinskii pereulok*, in which Mamleev flat was located. Having been forced to emigrate in 1975, Mamleev went first to the United States where he taught at Cornell University and, in 1983, to France where he taught at the Sorbonne. In 1991, he returned to Moscow where he became a prominent collaborator of Dugin's *Arktogeya* (Northern Land) association and “New University.” He also became an adjunct professor at Moscow State University teaching Indian philosophy.¹¹ Mamleev has been called “a representative of the aesthetics of evil,”¹² and describes in his cryptic novels scenes of human perversion and degradation.¹³

After Mamleev's emigration, the circle started, in the late 1970s, calling itself “Black Order of the SS,” and its leader Evgenii Golovin (b. 1936) *Reichsführer* SS. Golovin, a poet, philosopher, translator, literary critic and mystic, had studied philology at Moscow State University, and gained, as a student, access to the closed section of the USSR's largest, Lenin Library. He discovered integral Traditionalism in the early 1960s, led the Yuzhinskii circle

after Mamleev's departure,¹⁴ and became one of the earliest and, perhaps, most important mentors of young Dugin. He has continued to cooperate closely with Dugin after the break-up of the Soviet Union within, for instance, Dugin's mentioned “New University.”¹⁵ Otherwise, Golovin is said to live the life of an eremite in a small flat in Gorki-10, close to Moscow.

After its *samizdat* literature had been discovered by the KGB and Mamleev expelled,⁹ the Yuzhinskii circle became more secretive and took new members only through some initiation ritual.¹⁶ Various reports have alleged that the circle's members included, at different points, apart from Golovin, Dugin and Mamleev, the Islamist Geidar Dzhemal,¹⁷ the artists Anatolii Zverev and Vladimir Pyatnitskii, the poets Genrikh Zapgir, Yuri Kublanovskii and Leonid Gubanov, the philosopher Vladimir Stepanov, and even the famous writers Vladimir Sorokin and Venedikt Erofeev.¹⁸ According to one source, in 1978–1988, the group was led by Geidar Dzhemal, and, in 1983–1989, also by Dugin.¹⁹

The Azeri Dzhemal (b. 1947) was, at that time, apparently a close friend of Dugin, and had a biography somewhat similar to Dugin's. In 1967, Dzhemal too had been expelled from his higher education institution, the Institute for Oriental Languages (where, at the same time, another future post-Soviet right-wing extremist Vladimir Zhirinovskii studied) for political reasons, and subsequently become an autodidact interested in Integral Traditionalism. In 1980, Dzhemal, Dugin and Golovin went for a month-long trip to the Zerafshan mountains in the North-East Pamirs.²⁰ In the same year, Dzhemal joined the Naqshbandiyya Sufi Muslim order in Tajikistan. During the 1990s, Dzhemal became a prominent Islamist publicist in Russia, and co-leader of the microscopic Party of Islamic Rebirth. At one point, he was allied to Aleksandr Lebed and the Movement in the Support of the Army. In 1995, Dzhemal tried, unsuccessfully to enter the State Duma.⁹ Though the relationship between Dzhemal and Dugin was, at times, strained—for instance, when Dzhemal was affiliated for some time to Dugin's rival, microscopic Eurasian Party of Russia of Abdul-Vakhed Niyazov—they have recently renewed their cooperation.

For Dugin, the influence of Golovin was especially important, and one report says that it was Golovin, a professional translator and polyglot, who motivated Dugin

¹⁰ As quoted in Berezovskii, Krotov, and Chervyakov (1991). Two of the authors of this exceptionally informative multi-volume handbook, Vladimir Berezovskii and Valerii Chervyakov, helped me collecting material for my research in the mid-1990s, and, tragically, died in a car-accident in the late 1990s.

¹¹ Kaledin, “Terapiya okazalas' bessil'noi pered maniei Dugina-mladshogo pereustroit' mir;” Polyannikov, “Po tropam Khimery, ili razmyshlenniya o evraziistve i 'novom mirovom poriadke.”

¹² *Die Zeit*, no. 40 (2002), Sonderbeilage “Zeitliteratur,” 19.

¹³ See <http://www.rvb.ru/Mamleyev/index.htm>, <http://arctogaia.com/Mamleyev/>, and <http://arctogaia.com/public/Mamleyev/>.

¹⁴ See Likhachev, *Natsizm v Rossii*, 101. Polyannikov, “Po tropam Khimery, ili razmyshlenniya o evraziistve i 'novom mirovom poriadke.” Kaledin, “Terapiya okazalas' bessil'noi pered maniei Dugina-mladshogo pereustroit' mir.” Berezovskii, Krotov and Chervyakov, *Rossiia*, 42.

¹⁵ See <http://golovin.evrazia.org/>, <http://www.arctogaia.com/public/golovin/>. Many of Golovin's publications may be found at URL (last accessed October 2006): <http://egolovin.narod.ru/index2.html>. For further information, see URL (last accessed October 2006): http://www.geocities.com/mo_uru/s-s/s-s.htm, URL (last accessed October 2006): <http://www.phg.ru/issue21/fg-10.html>.

¹⁶ One source alleges that this initiation ritual consisted of Golovin urinating into the mouth of the new apostle. See Kaledin, “Terapiya okazalas' bessil'noi pered maniei Dugina-mladshogo pereustroit' mir.” While this may not have been the case, the Mamleev-Golovin circle is, indeed, by most observers described as having been interested in bizarre experiments as a way of self-discovery.

¹⁷ Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 223. On Dzhemal, see Kur'yanov (1995). For a book by Dzhemal in a Western language, see Jamal (1993).

¹⁸ Kaledin, “Terapiya okazalas' bessil'noi pered maniei Dugina-mladshogo pereustroit' mir.” Interestingly, Eduard Limonov apparently knew Golovin and Mamleev before his emigration in the 1970s, but was not especially close to them. That was in spite of Limonov's interest, at that time, for mysticism. Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 203.

¹⁹ Berezovskii, Krotov, and Chervyakov, *Rossiia*, 42; Menzel (2007).

²⁰ Oreshkin, “Spor Slavyan;” URL (last accessed October 2006): <http://www.nns.ru/Person/jemal/>; Pribylovskii (1995); Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 222–223, 257–260.

to learn foreign languages. The same source says that “Golovin’s lectures on hermeneutics, Traditionalism and Eurasianism were received by Dugin as eye-opening.”¹⁹ Dugin later spoke of the circle as “the true masters of the Moscow esoteric elite.”²¹ Dugin’s first major contribution to the activities of the circle, apparently, was his translation of Julius Evola’s writing *Pagan Imperialism* into Russian language, in the early 1980s.²² According to one source, in 1989, the Golovin circle started to publish a *samizdat* newspaper *Poslednii polyus* (The Last Pole) which was edited by I. Dudinskii, had a circulation of 3000–5000 copies, and appeared altogether three times.²³ Dzhemal, Golovin and Mamleev have continued to collaborate with Dugin after the break-up of the Soviet Union, and are contributing today to his various publications and other activities.²⁴

During a visit to Western Europe in 1989, Dugin met a number of ultra-nationalist European publicists including the Frenchman Alain de Benoist, the Belgian Jean-François Thiriart, and Italian Claudio Mutti. Possibly, Dugin was able to establish contacts with some of them thanks to the help of Mamleev who, at that time, must have lived in Paris.²⁵ Later, these men, together with other, similarly oriented theorists, visited Dugin in Moscow, and participated to one degree or another in his various projects.²⁶ In 1991, Dugin published a book called *Continente Russia* in Mutti’s Italian publishing house.²⁷ According to a further source, the Golovin circle had also contacts to the French publishing house called *Vivrisim*, and to a Paris philosophical group around Tat’yana Goricheva.²⁸

During perestroika, Dugin took, at first, a brief interest in the radical wing of the democratic movement led by Valeriya Novodvorskaya.²⁹ In 1987, he, together with Dzhemal, entered, on Golovin’s advice, however, Dmitrii Vasil’ev’s anti-semitic National-Patriotic Front *Pamyat’*, Moscow’s major independent ultra-nationalist organization, at this time.³⁰ Having served at the Central Council of *Pamyat’* in 1988–1989, Dugin, however, left the organization after a conflict with Vasil’ev who had called him a “kike-mason.”³¹

Dugin and Prokhanov’s *Den/Zavtra*

From 1988 to 1991, Dugin was editor-in-chief for a publisher called *EON* (perhaps, his own creation).³² The most important event of his early political biography was his entering, in 1991, of the editorial board of the major Russian ultra-nationalist weekly *Den* (The Day) founded in November 1990, and later re-named into *Zavtra* (Tomorrow).³³ The weekly called itself “Organ of the Spiritual Opposition” and “A Newspaper of the State of Russia” (Mitrofanova, 2005). It has since its creation been edited by the well-known journalist and novelist, and one-time rocketry engineer, forester, KGB agent,³⁴ Asia-Africa correspondent of the high-brow weekly *Literaturnaya gazeta* (Literature newspaper), and secretary of the RSFSR Writer’s Union Aleksandr Andreevich Prokhanov (b. 1938). Prokhanov is a writer, editor and ideologist of the Russian extreme right who has attracted considerable Western attention.³⁵ For his previous glorification of the Soviet Afghanistan adventure and general militarism, Prokhanov was labeled the “nightingale of the [Army] General Staff,”³⁶ and has been compared to Rudyard Kipling.³⁷ In the mid-1980s, he “came under increasing fire from literary critics for the crude militarism and lacking literary qualities of his writings” (Simonsen, 1996). Igor Klyamkin noted already in mid-1988 the growing political influence of the writer.³⁸

Prokhanov’s core ideas are summarized in his programmatic essay “The Ideology of Survival” published in 1990. There, Prokhanov claims that, in 1942 (when the Nazis stood at the gates of Moscow and the Comintern broke down), the Communist Party became the party of the Russian people – a thesis that exemplifies the ambivalent relationship of many ultra-nationalists to Russia’s Soviet past.³⁹ On the one hand, original Bolshevism (in some instances including Lenin) is rejected, and often equated with the post-Soviet democrats (who, in turn, are frequently portrayed as “criminals”). On the other hand, the “achievements” (sometimes including the purges) of Stalin who, though being a Georgian, is seen as a Russian national hero, rather than an Old Bolshevik, are greatly appreciated.⁴⁰ In Mitrofanova’s words, “Aleksandr Prokhanov simply equates ‘anti-liberal’, ‘Soviet’ and ‘Orthodox.’ For

²¹ Dugin and Limonov (1993); as quoted in Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 191.

²² Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 192.

²³ Berezovskii, Krotov and Chervyakov, *Rossiya*, 42.

²⁴ Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 190–199.

²⁵ Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 192; Polyannikov, “Po tropam Khimery, ili razmyshlenniia o evraziistve i ‘novom mirovom poriadke.’”

²⁶ Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 192.

²⁷ Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 332.

²⁸ Berezovskii, Krotov and Chervyakov, *Rossiya*, 42.

²⁹ Polyannikov, “Po tropam Khimery, ili razmyshlenniia o evraziistve i ‘novom mirovom poriadke.’” Another author alleges that Dugin and Dzhemal wanted to emigrate to Libya in the mid-1980s. See Kaledin, “Terapiya okazalas’ bessil’noi pered maniei Dugina-mladshogo pereustroit’ mir.” According to some sources, Dugin was once married to Evgeniya Debryanskaya, a leader of Russian feminism. See Polyannikov, “Po tropam Khimery, ili razmyshlenniia o evraziistve i ‘novom mirovom poriadke.’” His current wife, however, is his close colleague Natal’ya Melent’eva who is an active editor and writer for *Arktogaya* and *Evrasiya*.

³⁰ Personal communication with Vyacheslav Likhachev, Spring 2005; Polyannikov, “Po tropam Khimery, ili razmyshlenniia o evraziistve i ‘novom mirovom poriadke.’” Kaledin, “Terapiya okazalas’ bessil’noi pered maniei Dugina-mladshogo pereustroit’ mir.”

³¹ Pribylovskii, *Vozhdi*, 44–45; Polyannikov, “Po tropam Khimery, ili razmyshlenniia o evraziistve i ‘novom mirovom poriadke.’”

³² URL (last accessed October 2006): <http://eurasia.com.ru/leaders/dugin.html>. Not much is known about *EON*, a publishing house from which I have not been able to find any books.

³³ The recent issues of this most important weekly of the extreme Right may be found at URL (last accessed October 2006): <http://www.zavtra.ru/>.

³⁴ *Novyi vzgl'yad*, no. 19 (1994).

³⁵ E.g. Shenfield (1987); Hielscher (1992); Pittman (1992); Dunlop (1995); Hahn (1994); Allensworth, *The Russian Question*, 244–248.

³⁶ As quoted in John B. Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet Empire*, 169.

³⁷ Allensworth, *The Russian Question*, 245; Pribylovskii, *Vozhdi*, 84.

³⁸ Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet Empire*, 171. See also Allensworth, *The Russian Question*, 246.

³⁹ Prokhanov (1990); Simonsen, *Politics and Personalities*, 100.

⁴⁰ For a succinct summary of Prokhanov’s article see Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet Empire*, 172–174.

him not only Kim Jong Il and [Slobodan] Milosevic are [Christian] Orthodox, but also Fidel Castro, Yasser Arafat and even European nationalists Jean-Marie Le Pen and Jörg Haider.”⁴¹

With the gradual break-up of the Soviet Union in 1990–1991, Prokhanov's major focus of activity switched from that of a writer, to that of an editor for, and organizer of, the extreme right. Prokhanov's doings eventually led to the regular publication of his weekly *Den'* from January 1991 onwards, and the gathering of a distinguished circle of ultra-nationalist analysts as the newspaper's regular contributors. Victor Yasmann observed in 1993 that Prokhanov had by then secured contributions to *Den'* from “the former rector of Moscow State University, the director of the thermo-nuclear center in Protvino, academician Anatolii Logunov, and the director of the Institute of Socio-Political Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Gennadii Osipov” (Yasmann, 1993, here 35). Among the aims of *Den'/Zavtra* is to introduce to nationalist intellectuals new trends in Russian and foreign right-wing thought, and to analyze the current power structures as well as to provide interpretations of their activities from a “patriotic” point of view (Ivanov, 1996). Mitrofanova writes that “[i]n many aspects, *Zavtra* is an ‘anti-news-paper.’ It publishes no fresh or exclusive information: only interpretations and explanations of current events.”⁴²

Prokhanov's aim, apparently, was and is to use the newspaper *Den'/Zavtra* to bring together various brands of Russian ultra-nationalism, and induce their coordination and unification. Prokhanov has been a driving force behind various broad alliances of, and ideological innovations—including the spread of Eurasianism—in, the Russian extreme right (Verkhovskii, Papp, & Pribylovskii, 1996). He became “the far Right's unofficial minister of propaganda.”⁴³ *Den'/Zavtra's* editorial board included, at one point or another, with only few exceptions, most major Russian opposition figures of the 1990s. In mid-1994, Prokhanov claimed that his newspaper was influencing Moscow's elite groups and becoming a factor in the formation of post-Soviet ideology.⁴⁴ According to Michael Specter, “[p]erhaps more than any man in Russia, [Prokhanov] helped for [...] the powerful alliance of Communists and nationalist groups that [made] Gennady A. Zyuganov [...] the main challenger for the Russian presidency [in 1996].”⁴⁵ In Wayne Allensworth's words,

Prokhanov has engineered the various concrete forms the [communist-nationalist] coalition has taken since the collapse of the Soviet Union (the National Salvation Front and the People's Patriotic Union that backed Zyuganov's 1996 presidential candidacy, for example). The founder of the most influential nationalist publication in Russia has worked diligently to promote opposition

unity and is perhaps the only nationalist figure who has remained on good terms with his comrades across the political spectrum.⁴⁶

In 1994, Prokhanov had announced: “I limit my activities to the publication of a newspaper and the creation of ideological and propagandistic fields and energy.”⁴⁷ Having devoted most of his energies to editorial and organizational work for the extreme right during the 1990s, Prokhanov, in 2001, made himself again known as a notable ultra-nationalist writer in his own right. He published, under the imprint of the respected Moscow press *Ad Marginem*, a best-selling political novel called *Gospodin Geksogen* (Mr. Hexogen) fictionalizing the 1999 apartment-block bombings in Moscow and other cities. In May 2002, the notorious book won him the prestigious 2001 National Bestseller Prize. Prokhanov donated the \$10,000 prize-money to the defense of NBP-leader Eduard Limonov who was then awaiting his trial on charges of illegal arms ownership and attempting to overthrow the constitutional order (Bondarenko, 2002; Gavrillov, 2002; Proskurin, 2002; Yasmann, 2002).

In mid-1992, in Alexander Yanov's words, “having nearly monopolized the central periodical of the opposition, *Den'*, Dugin was halfway to elbowing [the competing anti-Western publicist Sergey] Kurginyan out of the opposition's intellectual leadership” (Yanov, 1995). Dugin seems to have had considerable influence, not the least, on Prokhanov himself. The latter reproduced a core idea of Dugin's early manifesto “The Great War of the Continents” published in 1991–1992 in *Den'*, namely the idea of a confrontation between a pro-Western KGB and Russian patriotic GRU, in his mentioned novel *Gospodin Geksogen*.⁴⁸ Dugin, in turn, had been earlier influenced by the writings of Prokhanov, as documented by the various references to Prokhanov in Dugin's “The War of the Continents” first published in *Den'* in 1991–1993 (Dugin, 1992a; reprinted in: Dugin, 1992b). Later, Dugin edited, for a while, *Zavtra's* temporary special sections *Vtorzhenie: national-bol'shevistskaya territoriya* (Invasion: The National-Bolshevik Territory) and *Evraziiskoe vtorzhenie* (Eurasian Invasion).⁴⁹

Dugin as a publicist⁵⁰

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Dugin's activities resembled those of other politically active intellectuals of this period: He was building up his research and publication center, and trying to propagate his ideas among ultra-nationalist political organizations, and further potential supporters in such spheres as youth groups, the military, secret services, and academia. Like other nationalist publicists, he attempted to smuggle his ideas into nationalist politics. In the words of Mark Sedgwick, Dugin and Dzhemal in 1987–1989, for instance, had “hoped to

⁴¹ Mitrofanova, *The Politicization of Russian Orthodoxy*, 63.

⁴² Mitrofanova, *The Politicization of Russian Orthodoxy*, 109.

⁴³ Laqueur, *Fascism*, 192.

⁴⁴ Pribylovskii, *Vozhdi*, 84–85; *Inform—600 sekund*, no. 4 (1994); Simonsen, *Politics and Personalities*, 93.

⁴⁵ *New York Times*, 2nd May 1996, A1, as quoted in Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 331.

⁴⁶ Allensworth, *The Russian Question*, 261.

⁴⁷ *Inform—600 sekund*, no. 4 (1994), as quoted in Simonsen, *Politics and Personalities*, 93.

⁴⁸ Mitrofanova, *The Politicization of Russian Orthodoxy*, 92–93.

⁴⁹ Mitrofanova, *The Politicization of Russian Orthodoxy*, 109.

⁵⁰ See also, Umland (2003, 2004, 2006f).

influence [*Pamyat'*] toward Traditionalism, rather as [Mircea] Eliade had hoped to use the Legion of the Archangel Michael in Romania, and [Julius] Evola had hoped to use the Fascists, the *Herrenclub*, and the SS."⁵¹ While this early attempt by Dugin of the late 1980s was unsuccessful, the record in the 1990s is a mixed one.

The two principal institutions that Dugin founded in 1990–1991, and that later became his main instruments for spreading his views were the Historical-Religious Association *Arktogetya* (Northern Country) which also functions as a publishing house, and the Center for Special Meta-Strategic Studies, a think-tank later renamed into Center for Geopolitical Expertise.⁵² Numerous institutions such as these sprang up in Russia in the early 1990s. Most of them have since remained marginal or vanished altogether remaining mere footnotes in post-Soviet Russia's early history.

In contrast, Dugin's various publications were more original and widely read in nationalist circles, than the drier, if, partly, not less numerous works of other publicists such as Sergei Kurginyan and his Experimental Creative Center.⁵³ This was not the least, because of the frequent contributions by, or references to, inter- and post-war Western authors in Dugin's journals and books. Dugin's, for the taste of Western readers, bizarre obsession with esotericism might have also contributed to his growing popularity in some Russian sub-cultures devoted to various brands of Russian and international occultism, Traditionalism, paganism etc. In 1991, Dugin published his first larger and widely noted books with characteristic titles such as *The Mysteries of Eurasia*⁵⁴ and *The Paths of the Absolute*, as well as the first issues of the almanach *Milyy Angel* (Enchanting Angel)⁵⁵ and abortive journal *Giperboreets* (The Hyperborean).⁵⁶ These were followed by numerous books, and some other periodicals.⁵⁷

Contributing frequently to *Den'* and other newspapers, in July 1992, Dugin launched what would become the periodical establishing his reputation in Russia and abroad, the journal *Elementy: Evraziiskoe obozrenie* (Elements:

Eurasian Review; 9 issues published in 1992–1998).⁵⁸ It was partly modeled on Alain de Benoist's pan-European network of journals of the same name, but went, in a number of ways, further than its West European counterparts leading de Benoist to temporarily distance himself from Dugin. *Elementy* included, apart from Dugin's and his followers' articles, interviews with a number of prominent Russian ultra-nationalists politicians such as Sergei Baburin (then RSFSR Supreme Soviet deputy and later a State Duma deputy for *Rodina*), Eduard Limonov, Viktor Alksnis (former USSR Supreme Soviet deputy, member of *Elementy's* editorial board and current State Duma deputy), or the late Metropolitan Ioann (Snychev, 1927–1995).⁵⁹ *Elementy* was especially noticeable for its sophisticated use of illustrations with accompanying inscriptions.⁶⁰ Every issue contained, at least, one contribution by a foreign author of either the inter-/post-war periods like Julius Evola, Mircea Eliade and Carl Schmitt, or contemporary West European New Right, e.g. de Benoist, Mutti, Thiriart, Armin Mohler, or Robert Steukers.⁶¹ The contributors of *Elementy* also included representatives of other right-radical intellectual centers such as Evgenii Morozov of the International Institute of Geopolitics.

In September 1993, a series of documentaries under the title *O tainakh veka* (On the Secrets of the Century) authored by Dugin and Yurii Vorob'evskii was shown on the First and Fourth Russian TV channels. The program took an apologetic approach to historic fascism, explained empathetically Nazi symbols and mysticism, and admitted the possibility of a non-compromised, benign, intellectual fascism.⁶² As a result it was shut down.

In spite of Dugin's co-foundation in 1993–1994 and co-leadership in 1994–1998 of Eduard Limonov's anti-systemic National-Bolshevik Party, he, in 1996, also became an irregular contributor to the major liberal high-brow daily *Nezavisimaya gazeta* (Independent Newspaper). This newspaper later provided a regular forum for the presentation and discussion of Dugin's ideology.⁶³ Stephen Shenfield further noted that

[i]n 1997 Dugin had a weekly hour-long radio program called *Finis Mundi* [End of the World] on the popular music station *FM 101*. This series, which attracted a cult following of university students, was suspended after sixteen weeks. Dugin later established a second program on a less well-known station, *Free Russia*.⁶⁴

⁵¹ Dugin later described *Pamyat's* members as "hysterics, KGB collaborators, and schizophrenics." Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 224.

⁵² See URL (last accessed October 2006): <http://www.arctogaia.com/> and URL (last accessed October 2006): <http://www.acto.ru/>; URL (last accessed October 2006): <http://cge.evrziazia.org/>.

⁵³ Yanov, *Weimar Russia*, 275.

⁵⁴ On Dugin's first book, see Guseynov (2000).

⁵⁵ Now available on the web at URL (last accessed October 2006): <http://angel.org.ru/main.html>.

⁵⁶ Pribylovskii, *Vozhdi*, 45; Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 193.

⁵⁷ Dugin's books all published between 1991 and 2003 in Moscow under the imprint of *Arktogetya* include *Misterii Evrazii* (1991, 1996), *Puti Absolyuta* (1991), *Konspirologiya: Nauka o zagovorakh, tainykh obshchestvakh i okkul'tnoi voine* (1992/93), *Giperboreiskaya teoriya: Opyt ariosofofskogo issledovaniya* (1992/93 (1993), *Konservativnaya revolyutsiya* (1995), *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti: Pravoslavnyi ezoterizm* (1996), *Tampliery proletariata: Natsional-bol'shevizm i initsiatsiya* (1997), *Konets sveta: Eskhatologiya i traditsiya* (1998), *Nash put': Strategicheskie perspektivy razvitiya Rossii v XXI veke* (1999), *Absolyutnaya Rodina: Puti Absolyuta. Metafizika Blagoi Vesti. Misterii Evrazii* (1999), *Russkaya veshch': Ocherki natsional'noi filosofii*, 2 Vols. (2001), *Evolutsiya paradigmal'nykh osnov nauki* (2002), *Filosofiya traditsionalizma* (2002), *Evrasiiskii put' kak Natsional'naya ideya* (2002), and *Filosofiya politiki* (2003).

⁵⁸ See URL (last accessed October 2006): <http://elem2000.virtualave.net/>. On this journal: Nikolai-Klaus von Kreitor (who later became a member of *Elementy's* editorial board) (Nikolai-Klaus von Kreitor, 1993); Luks, "Der 'Dritte Weg' der 'neo-eurasischen' Zeitschrift 'Elementy'—zurück ins Dritte Reich?";

⁵⁹ On Baburin, see *Za yedinuyu i velikuyu Rossiyu: istoriya Rossiiskogo obshchenarodnogo soyuza v dokumentakh 1991–1994* (Moskva: Novator, 1995); Baburin (1995); Khairuzov (1996). On Ioann, see Slater (2000).

⁶⁰ Mitrofanova, *The Politicization of Russian Orthodoxy*, 56.

⁶¹ *Elementy* are available on the web at URL (last accessed October 2006): <http://elem2000.virtualave.net/>.

⁶² Pribylovskii, *Vozhdi*, 44–45; Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 193; Verkhovskiy, Papp and Pribylovskiy, *Politicheskiy ekstremizm v Rossii*, 247.

⁶³ See Dugin, *Tampliery proletariata*, 324; Dugin (2001a, 2001b); *Rabotyazh* (2001).

⁶⁴ Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 193.

There he led, in 1997–1999, a program called “Geopolitical Review.”⁶⁵ There have been also reports that Dugin has been giving lectures at the Russian Academy of the General Staff. One commentator mentions cooperation of Dugin with the Ministry of Defense journal *Orientiry* (Orientations).⁶⁶ Shenfield noted a relationship between Dugin and the head of the company *Russkoe zoloto* (Russian Gold), Aleksandr Tarantsev.⁶⁷

In 1997, Dugin published the first edition of his, perhaps, most influential work *Osnovy Geopolitiki* (The Foundations of Geopolitics) that quickly sold out, acquired the status of a seminal study, and became a text-book at various Russian higher education institutions, especially those of the military (Dugin, 1997).⁶⁸ It is a book that earned him wide attention – not only in the nationalist section of Russia's elite. Jacob Kipp reported concerning the publication of the first edition of *Osnovy Geopolitiki* in 1997:

When I was in Moscow in June, the Dugin book was a topic of hot discussion among military and civilian analysts at a wide range of institutes, including the Academy of State Management, and in the [presidential administration] offices at *Staraya ploshchad'* [Old Square].⁶⁹

Alan Ingram noted that “[e]ditions one and two [of *Osnovy Geopolitiki*] sold out, and the first printing of the third edition (5000) copies was becoming difficult to obtain in September 1999.”⁷⁰ Dugin claimed that the Georgian translation of this book sold 5000 copies in little Georgia.⁷¹ In 1999, a chapter from the book was reprinted in a major scholarly anthology on Russian foreign policy and security (Dugin, 1999). By 2000, *Osnovy Geopolitiki* had gone through its fourth edition, and become a major political pamphlet with a wide readership in academic and political circles (Dugin, 2000).⁷²

Summary and outlook

This brief survey is neither an intellectual biography nor a discourse analysis. It aims to make a contribution to the growing literature on the Russian “New Right” by way of detailing some of the circumstances within which its leading ideologist Aleksandr Dugin made his first steps as a translator, writer and publisher. It focused on some prolific late and post-Soviet writers and journalists (Mamleev, Golovin, Dzhemal, Prokhanov) in order to uncover sources of Dugin's political ideas and impulses for his activities. The background and outlook of Dugin's various acquaintances

from this period also goes some way to explain how he, at relatively early age, managed to become an increasingly influential intellectual within Russia's emerging non-communist anti-Western sub-culture, and to, eventually, reach out, with his *Osnovy geopolitiki*, beyond the lunatic fringe. While there is a body of literature on Dugin's ideas, further research on the period analyzed here and later developments in his rise is needed in order to more comprehensively explain the origins of his ideology and determinants for his relative success. Subjects for such investigations in the future could be, for instance,

- (a) the origins, nature and depth of Dugin's ties to Western right-wing intellectuals and activists,
- (b) the specifics of Dugin's connections to such institutions as the Russian Army's General Staff, Security Services, and Presidential Administration,
- (c) the exact circumstances of his rapprochement and cooperation with State Duma Speaker Gennady Seleznev in 1998–2001,
- (d) the particulars of the creation and transmutations of Dugin's “Eurasian Movement” from 2001 until today.

For the foreseeable future, the Russian “New Right” and, in particular, Dugin will remain topical research subjects. As Russian-Western relations are declining and Russian nationalism rising, their study will gain further relevance for an adequate assessment of Russian foreign and domestic policies.

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⁶⁵ URL (last accessed October 2006): <http://eurasia.com.ru/leaders/dugin.html>.

⁶⁶ Kaledin, “Terapiya okazalas' bessil'noi pered maniei Dugina-mladshogo pereustroit' mir.”

⁶⁷ Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 199.

⁶⁸ Sedgwick adds that, at this point, “Dugin had already published [the article] ‘Geopolitics as Destiny’ in the April 25, 1997, issue of *Krasnaya zvezda* [Red Star], the army newspaper [...]” Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 229.

⁶⁹ As quoted in Shenfield *Russian Fascism*, 199.

⁷⁰ Ingram, “Alexander Dugin,” 1032.

⁷¹ See URL (last accessed October 2006): <http://arctogaia.com/public/litgaz1.html>.

⁷² See also Shenfield, *Russian Fascism*, 199; and Ingram, “Alexander Dugin,” 1032.

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